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Egypt: The Press Under Mubarak

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An Intelligence Assessment

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NESA 84-10187
May 1984

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An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by [redacted]
Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis,
with contributions by [redacted] Office of
Central Reference, and [redacted] FBIS. [redacted]

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Comments and queries are welcome and may be
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**Egypt:
The Press Under Mubarak**

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Key Judgments*Information available
as of 8 May 1984
was used in this report.*

The Egyptian press continues to shape the opinions of a large number of Egyptians and is freer under President Mubarak than at any time since the military coup of 1952. He has reinstated journalists and restored opposition periodicals that provoked Sadat's crackdown on his critics in September 1981. Mubarak recently has allowed the creation of new opposition party papers and also may permit the religious opposition to resume publishing. Mubarak's objectives in allowing a freer press are to build political legitimacy among civilian elites, to reassure foreign observers of the regime's commitment to human rights, and to enhance his democratic image before the parliamentary election on 27 May.

The Egyptian press is still less free than its Western counterparts. Government-owned publications exercise self-censorship, and the regime has increasingly tightened political guidelines and editorial review. The opposition press does not undergo prepublication censorship but is vulnerable to government pressures such as restricting the distribution of newsprint and the threat of confiscation, closure, or even arrest. Mubarak appears to recognize that, despite a popular desire for greater press freedom, most Egyptians also expect the regime to maintain a "disciplined" press.

Mubarak's relations with the opposition press probably will grow testier in the months ahead. The parliamentary election is stimulating opposition criticism of the regime. Mubarak's relations with journalists in the government-owned press, moreover, may erode if he continues to tighten controls. In both instances, Mubarak probably will avoid Sadat's confrontational style with individual journalists by letting the courts or administrative oversight bodies take any disciplinary measures. Should Mubarak believe that the opposition press is seriously threatening his prestige and position, however, he probably would risk the negative domestic and international consequences of shutting it down.

The criticism of US policy that appears routinely in the opposition press and occasionally in the government-owned press probably will continue. Mubarak appears to tolerate such criticism—and possibly to encourage it—to defuse Egyptian frustrations, build credibility with other Arab states, and improve his nonaligned image abroad. US efforts to curb Egyptian press criticism of US or Israeli policies probably will be only marginally successful. We believe that Egyptian officials resent what they believe to be a double standard by which US officials ask for such curbs while encouraging press freedom on other topics.

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Egypt: The Press Under Mubarak

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Press Freedom Under Mubarak

President Mubarak has come closer than his predecessor, Sadat, in fulfilling the guarantees of press freedom contained in the Constitution of 1971 and the press law of 1980. An opposition press currently operates without official guidelines or review. The government-owned press (commonly called in Egypt the "national" press) exercises self-censorship based on flexible guidelines and loosely defined political guidance.

The Egyptian press, therefore, has more vitality than the rubberstamp presses of most Middle Eastern countries, but it is less free than the press in Western states. The opposition press is vulnerable to government pressure and normally heeds Mubarak's private and public warnings. Opposition party leaders recognize that Mubarak could restrict their supply of newsprint and confiscate their papers—a favorite tactic of Sadat. Mubarak's recent confiscation of an issue of the New Wafd opposition party paper shows his willingness to resort to such measures. In addition, the US Embassy and other sources indicate that, over the past year, Mubarak has been tightening controls over the government-owned press.

In the government-owned press, the editors-in-chief are responsible for deleting material that is considered contrary to national interest. The government expects their publications, moreover, to be even more "socially responsible" than they were under Sadat. According to the press law of 1980, journalists can be prosecuted not only for treason but for defamation, sensationalizing sex or crime, propagating atheism, or encouraging youth to become socially or morally deviant.

The editors of the government-owned press receive political guidance from the regime in weekly meetings attended by presidential adviser Osama al-Baz and Minister of State for Information Safwat al-Sharif. According to the US Embassy, these meetings provide editors with Mubarak's thinking while allowing them



Egyptian looks at newspaper headlining the assassination attempt on President Reagan in March 1981.

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an opportunity to vent their frustrations to the government. A US Embassy official said some of these sessions have been acrimonious, with editors acceding to the regime's guidance only under pressure.

To date, Mubarak's system seems to be effective because few journalists have been suspended or arrested. One exception is the former chief editor of *Al-Ahram*, Muhammad Hassanayn Haykal. His book *Autumn of Fury*, a political critique of the Sadat period, is banned in Egypt, and he apparently is allowed to articulate his ideas only in interviews. Another exception is Yusif Idris, a novelist and

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Two Egyptians seated near a sphinx at Cairo Museum read newspapers headlining news of the fighting during the war with Israel in October 1973. [redacted]

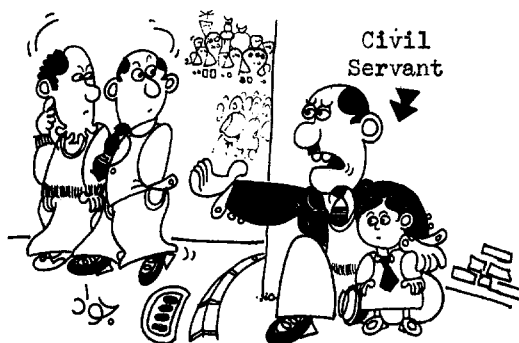
Wide World ©

former *Al-Ahram* writer. He no longer is allowed to publish in the Egyptian press because in past articles he has characterized Egypt's military victory over Israel in 1973 as "imaginary." [redacted]

The Government-Owned Press

Mubarak, unlike Sadat, has developed few personal animosities toward members of the government-owned press. He has retained most of the key press officials appointed by Sadat in 1981. Mubarak has good rapport with several journalists but appears to work closely with only a few. Western observers note that the chief editor of *Al-Ahram*, Ibrahim Nafei, appears to have frequent access to Mubarak. MENA chairman Muhammad Abd al-Gawad, prior to his recent retirement, briefed the President daily on international developments, according to US Embassy reporting. Gawad's successor, Mustafa Najib, probably will do the same. [redacted]

During his first year in office, Mubarak appeared highly tolerant of ideological diversity and debate in the government-owned press. He allowed the return of Nasirist or leftist opinion by reinstating several journalists who had been removed by Sadat and who now publish daily columns alongside those of Sadat loyalists. The views of opposition political leaders appeared through interviews in the government-owned press



Five-hundred pounds, for the love of God. So that I can pay his kindergarten fees!

and later in the opposition parties' own papers, which were restored in May 1982. Even the views of Islamic fundamentalists who had opposed Sadat were aired. [redacted]

In this freer atmosphere, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the massacre of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in 1982 generated a wave of anti-Israeli and anti-Begin articles in the government-owned press. US reliability as a peace partner also was questioned. Later that year, the US economic aid program came under attack. In addition, the government-owned press seemed overzealous in its support of Mubarak's anticorruption campaign in late 1982 and early 1983. We do not believe the government ordered the sensationalist tone the press took on these issues. It initially appeared unwilling to censor, however, apparently believing it would be safer to allow Egyptians to vent their frustrations. In all these cases, the government press tempered the criticism once it began to embarrass the regime. [redacted]

The government-owned papers have been more reserved during the past year, probably because of government efforts to exert tighter controls. Muck-raking, for example, is lower key. Israeli Prime Minister Shamir's visit to Washington in November 1983 and the US-Israeli strategic agreement that followed

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The Egyptian Press:**Ownership, Organization, and Finance**

Egypt has the largest, most sophisticated press establishment in the Middle East, and several of its publications have a wide audience in the Arab world. Egyptian publications have a moderately high domestic readership, especially in urban areas, despite an estimated literacy rate of only 44 percent. The press today continues to shape the opinions of large numbers of Egyptians even though radio and television match it in importance. Journalists have a faithful following even among illiterate Egyptians, who have literate friends read them articles written by their favorite columnists. []

The five major publishing houses—*Al-Ahram*, *Akhbar al-Yawm*, *Al-Tahrir*, *Al-Hilal*, *Rose al-Yusuf*—that produce most national publications are government owned, as is the Middle East News Agency (MENA). In addition, the government-owned *Dar al-Maarif* prints mainly books but also some periodicals. The partisan press, including publications of the legal political parties as well as the shuttered press of the religious right, is privately owned. The regional press is insignificant; almost all newspapers and periodicals are printed in Cairo and Alexandria and distributed nationwide. All important newspapers and periodicals are in Arabic, although English- and French-language papers exist. []

The press law of 1980 restructured government oversight of the press. The law empowered the Consultative Council to appoint board chairmen and chief editors for the government-owned publishing houses and provided that certain other press officials be

elected by their peers. Both appointed and elected press officials may serve renewable terms but must retire at 60 unless exempted by presidential decree. Removal of press officials for disciplinary reasons requires a decree from the Consultative Council. []

The press law also created a Higher Press Council. Ostensibly an independent oversight authority, its composition favors government control. It is presided over by the chairman of the Consultative Council—a presidential appointee—and includes board directors and editors of the national press, editors of the partisan press, and the chairman of the press syndicate, all of whom serve four-year renewable terms. The Higher Press Council has authority to grant or terminate press licenses, to oversee the rights and responsibilities of journalists, to recommend disciplinary action against journalists, to allocate newsprint, and to fix prices of publications. []

The press law requires partisan newspapers to form cooperative or joint-stock companies and limits foreign influence by requiring full Egyptian ownership. Financial arrangements for the government-owned press are the same as under Nasir, with half of the profits going to employees and the other half to the upkeep and expansion of press facilities. Advertising provides significant funding, but the government-owned press probably is only barely profitable. Its bureaucracy suffers from the same inefficiencies prevalent in the rest of the government, and it relies on costly imported newsprint. []

elicited extensive criticism—including articles by usually pro-US journalists—but the tone was softer than in 1982. An editor of a government-owned publication recently told a US Embassy official that the regime had orchestrated some of this criticism in the hope of undercutting attacks by the legal opposition and maintaining a positive image with other Arab states. []

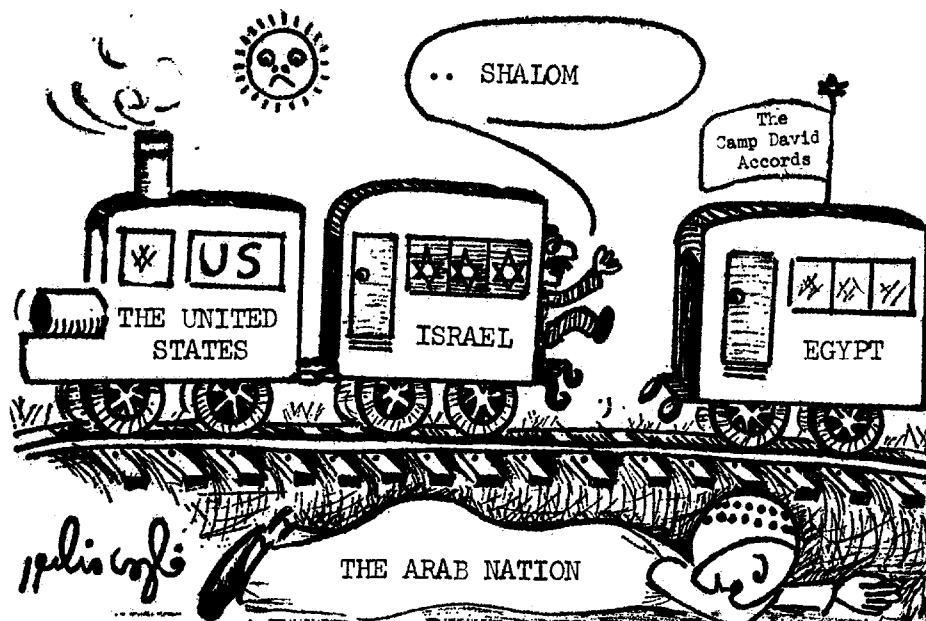
The Opposition Party Press

The five opposition party papers provide the civilian elite an important alternative source of information. The US Embassy reports that the readership of the opposition party newspapers extends far beyond their parties' official membership. []

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THE STRATEGIC COOPERATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN
THE UNITED STATES AND ISRAEL



Mubarak's relationship with the legal opposition has deteriorated significantly since mid-1982, when he became the first Egyptian president to grant interviews to opposition journalists. After the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, criticism in the opposition papers sometimes became as bold as in Sadat's last years. Mubarak responded by charging that the opposition press was "irresponsible" and attempting to impose the minority's will on Egypt. [REDACTED]

The Mubarak government has undercut some of the criticism of its foreign policy by stressing nonalignment and rapprochement with other Arab states. The opposition papers endorsed Egypt's recent readmission to the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) and Mubarak's meeting with PLO leader Yasir Arafat. These papers, however, have continued to criticize the peace with Israel and Egypt's strategic cooperation with the United States. [REDACTED]

The opposition press is even more critical of Mubarak's domestic policy, but Mubarak continues to escape direct attack. Several of his key ministers—especially Prime Minister Fuad Muhi al-Din—are

favorite targets. Major opposition themes include economic inequality, the demand for more political freedom, and the need to end high-level corruption, martial law, and controls on the press. [REDACTED]

The opposition newspapers have recently bitterly criticized Mubarak's new election law, which has made it more difficult for the smaller parties to obtain seats in parliament. The opposition parties have demanded specific guarantees of fair elections and threatened to embarrass the government with a boycott. Their newspapers have focused on alleged fraud in most elections under Sadat and called for Mubarak to abandon the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) and stand above party politics. [REDACTED]

**Journalists' Attitudes Toward
Mubarak's Press Policies**

Most journalists believe that Mubarak must go further in removing controls, especially those remaining

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As far as my wishes for 1984, my only wish is that "you know who" will be removed.



on the government-owned press. Egypt's press syndicate, in a statement in March 1983 that probably reflects the views of most Egyptian journalists, lauded Mubarak's move toward democracy and welcomed the return of the opposition press. It called, however, for the opening of the government-owned press to "all opinions and issues put forward by the people." The syndicate further stated that a freer press is necessary for the "democratic dialogue and debate" needed to "avoid the violence that has surfaced in Egyptian political life in past years." The journalists suggested that the government replace current officials in the government-owned press as a first step. The syndicate's statement—censored by the government-owned press—was carried only by the opposition press. [redacted]

Egyptian journalists have expressed to US Embassy officials sentiments that closely resemble those in the syndicate statement. A veteran journalist acknowledged that the press is freer under Mubarak than before but complained that chief editors of the government-owned press censor too heavily, acting as "if their job is to protect the government and NDP." He

noted that Mubarak's family was the only clearly taboo subject during 1981, but that the list of politically sensitive issues has now increased. For example, he suggested the government did not want to see reports of terrorist or illegal organizations under investigation or articles about the opposition parties. The journalist said that he practiced self-censorship to avoid having his work banned. [redacted]

Outlook

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The relaxation of press controls under Mubarak should not be viewed as a harbinger of Western-style press freedom in Egypt. The government's moves toward political liberalization, including an expansion of the partisan press, appear designed to impress domestic and foreign observers. In particular, they probably are aimed at improving the image of Mubarak's party before the parliamentary election on 27 May. In addition, Mubarak undoubtedly is aware that a democratic image improves his prospects for receiving much-needed economic aid and investment from the West. [redacted]

We believe most educated Egyptians want greater press freedom. The authoritarian pattern of government control since Nasir, however, has conditioned a large number of Egyptians to believe that the government must remain responsible for the press. Mubarak appears aware of these seemingly contradictory impulses and recognizes that liberalization should be accompanied by "discipline" in the press. He probably hopes to avoid the weak image as president suggested in 1982 by a US Embassy source, who said that, while Nasir arrested critical journalists and Sadat suspended them, "Mubarak yells at them and they just keep writing." [redacted]

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Mubarak probably will make no major structural changes in the national press establishment. He may make some adjustments, however, such as placing MENA under the Ministry of Information to exert greater government control over Egypt's only domestic news agency. In addition, he may alter the press

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law to stop the opposition press from taking advantage of loopholes such as publishing periodicals by using an old "book" license that does not require renewal. In the coming year, moreover, incumbent retirements and rotations will produce changes of chief editors and board chairmen of government-owned publications. Mubarak may take advantage of this period to appoint younger men loyal to him instead of older journalists identified with either Nasir or Sadat.

Mubarak's relations with journalists in the government-owned press may become increasingly strained if he continues to tighten controls. Many of the journalists Mubarak allowed to return after their removal by Sadat probably will test the government's political guidelines. Mubarak, however, probably will avoid Sadat's confrontational style by delegating disciplinary decrees to the Higher Press Council and the courts.

The Mubarak government's relations with the opposition press are likely to grow testier because the parliamentary election will stimulate increased criticism of government policies. Mubarak may use the

Higher Press Council to censure opposition journalists or even temporarily shut down individual publications. He will try to avoid a major crackdown, such as that imposed by Sadat in September 1981, for fear it would lead to more dangerous and violent forms of protest. We do not rule out a permanent closure of opposition publications, however, should Mubarak believe the opposition press is seriously threatening his prestige and position by claiming, for example, that the President is directly involved in corruption.

Implications for the United States

The anti-US tone that pervades the opposition press and occasionally occurs in government-owned publications probably will continue. The opposition criticizes US policy partly as an indirect way to attack the Mubarak government. Mubarak may tolerate such criticism to defuse Egyptian frustrations. He may also stimulate some criticism of US policies to build credibility at home and with other Arab states and to improve his nonaligned image abroad.

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Selected Newspapers and Periodicals ^a

	Publisher	Editor-in-Chief	Circulation	Comment
Government owned ^b				
Dailies				
<i>Al-Ahram</i> (<i>The Pyramids</i>)	Al-Ahram	Ibrahim Nafei	650,000	Newspaper of record . . . excellent coverage of foreign and national news . . . commentary geared to intellectuals.
<i>Al-Akhbar</i> (<i>The News</i>)	Akhbar al-Yawm	Musa Sabri	1,000,000	Highest circulation . . . excels on coverage of domestic events . . . attracts a wide readership in the middle class.
<i>Akhbar al-Yawm</i> (<i>Today's News</i>)	Akhbar al-Yawm	Ibrahim Saada	1,000,000	<i>Al-Akhbar's</i> weekend edition.
<i>Al-Jumhuriyah</i> (<i>The Republic</i>)	Al-Tahrir	Muhsin Muhammad	460,000	Least professional of the three major dailies . . . appeals to the less well educated.
<i>Al-Masaa</i> (<i>The Evening</i>)	Al-Tahrir	Samir Ragab	45,000	Largest evening daily.
<i>The Egyptian Gazette</i>	Al-Tahrir	Sami al-Shahid	10,000	English-language daily designed for foreigners.
<i>The Egyptian Mail</i>	Al-Tahrir	Sami al-Shahid	10,000	<i>The Egyptian Gazette's</i> weekend edition.
<i>Le Progres Egyptien</i>	Al-Tahrir	Naguib Hanayn (acting)	8,000	French-language daily geared to foreigners.
Weeklies				
<i>Akhir Saah</i> (<i>Last Minute</i>)	Akhbar al-Yawm	Wagdi Kendil	120,000	Popular pictorial . . . covers a wide variety of topics.
<i>Al-Musawwar</i> (<i>The Illustrated</i>)	Al-Hilal	Makram Muhammad Ahmad	53,000	Oldest political and social pictorial magazine . . . retains a strong leadership in the Arab world.
<i>Hawwa</i> (<i>Eve</i>)	Al-Hilal	Saad Hilmi	100,000	Women's general interest magazine.
<i>Rose al-Yusuf</i>	Rose al-Yusuf	Abd al-Aziz Khamis	25,000	Social and political commentary geared to intellectuals . . . traditionally oriented to the left . . . often has muckraking tone.
<i>Uktubar</i> (<i>October</i>)	Al-Maarif	Anis Mansur	70,000	Widely read and influential pictorial magazine . . . deals with a wide range of subjects.
<i>Sabah al-Khayr</i> (<i>Good Morning</i>)	Rose al-Yusuf	Louis Grace	50,000	Geared to younger audiences . . . content is social and political . . . presented in a light and upbeat format.
<i>Al-Ahram al-Iqtisaadi</i> (<i>The Economic Al-Ahram</i>)	Al-Ahram	Lutfi Abd al-Azim	30,000	Formerly a conservative economic magazine . . . since 1982 has become a de facto leftist opposition periodical with a muckraking tone . . . has criticized the US aid program.

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Confidential**Selected Newspapers and Periodicals ^a (continued)**

	Publisher	Editor-in-Chief	Circulation	Comment
Partisan press ^c				
Daily				
<i>Mayu</i> (<i>May</i>)	National Democratic Party (NDP)	Sabri Abu al-Majd	220,000 ^d	Paper of the ruling party . . . on occasion criticizes US foreign policy.
Opposition party weeklies				
<i>Al-Ahali</i> (<i>The Native Masses</i>)	National Progressive Unionist Party (NPUG)	Husayn Abd al-Razzaq	140,000	Leftist paper supporting Nasir's economic and social policies . . . muckraking and combative in its criticism of Mubarak's domestic and foreign policies . . . opposes Camp David and US military access rights.
<i>Al-Shaab</i> (<i>The People</i>)	Socialist Labor Party (SLP)	Hamid Zaydan	140,000	Moderate left . . . muckraking . . . blander than <i>Al-Ahali</i> . . . opposes Camp David and US access rights.
<i>Al-Ahrar</i> (<i>The Liberals</i>)	Socialist Liberal Party	Wadi Ghazi	70,000	Rightist paper with smallest circulation . . . advocates greater use of Islamic law and an expanded private sector.
<i>Al-Wafd</i> (<i>The Delegation</i>)	New Wafd Party	Mustafa Shardi	Unknown	Moderate right . . . favors political and economic liberalization . . . government confiscated recent issue.
Islamic weeklies				
<i>Al-Liwa al-Islami</i> (<i>The Islamic Standard</i>)	NDP	Ahmad Zayn	150,000	Islamic paper . . . most successful of the new Islamic periodicals . . . features nonestablishment religious figures . . . focuses on religion as it relates to current social issues.
<i>Al-Nur</i> (<i>The Light</i>)	Socialist Liberal Party	Muhammad Amir	Unknown	Islamic paper . . . also features nonestablishment religious figures . . . critical of Israeli and US policies in the Middle East.

^a This is not a complete list of publications. According to the *World Press Encyclopedia* (1982), the Egyptian press produces 17 dailies (Arabic, French, Greek, English, and Armenian) and 63 periodicals (Arabic, French, English, and Italian).

^b Circulation based on USIS estimates.

^c Circulation estimates based on US Embassy reports.

^d We estimate that paid subscriptions for *Mayu* probably do not exceed 70,000.

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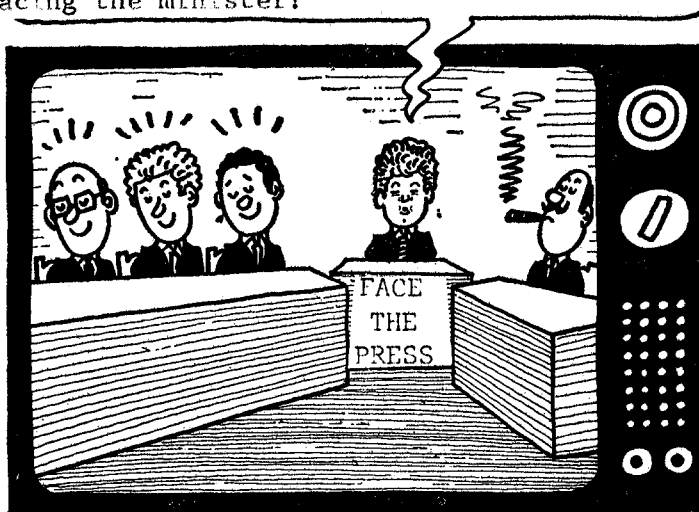
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Headquarters of Journalist
Syndicate in Cairo.



At the conclusion of the program we would like to thank the minister for kindly facing the press and likewise thank the journalists for kindly not facing the minister!



US efforts to influence the Mubarak government to temper press criticism of US and Israeli policies probably will have little success. Egyptian officials have regarded such efforts as interference in their domestic affairs and as fuel for leftist criticism concerning US influence on Mubarak. In addition, we believe the officials resent what appears to be a double

standard, by which US officials encourage a free press while demanding that anti-US and anti-Israeli criticism be curbed. Egyptian officials also appear concerned that the United States is not making similar efforts to curb articles hostile to Egypt in the Israeli press.

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Appendix A

The Press Under Nasir and Sadat

President Nasir created the basic pattern for government-press relations when he nationalized the Egyptian press in 1960. His apparent motivation was to make it an effective propaganda and political tool of the government. The national press was placed under the supervision of the government party—by then the only one permitted to exist. [REDACTED]

Government-press relations were relatively stable after nationalization because Nasir skillfully balanced tight government control and censorship with high pay and perquisites for journalists. Most journalists, fearing government reprisals, accepted nationalization and practiced self-censorship. A few dissenters were imprisoned or went into exile, especially in the mid-1960s when Nasir inserted leftist editors and writers into top positions. The Nasir regime, however, enhanced the press's stature at home and abroad by financing additional periodicals, creating the influential Middle East News Agency (MENA), and other innovations. Some journalists gained domestic and international prestige—particularly Muhammad Hassanayn Haykal who, as chief editor of *Al-Ahram*, was a close adviser to Nasir and spokesman for the regime. [REDACTED]

President Sadat's interest in political liberalization and experience as a journalist led him to relax government control of the press as part of a de-Nasirization campaign. Sadat hoped to democratize access to information and avoid the creation of power centers similar to *Al-Ahram* under Haykal. The constitution of 1971 guaranteed press freedom and protected journalists against arbitrary suspension by the government. Government control continued, however, and the press remained largely nationalized. Sadat sought to contain leftist influence and encourage political diversity by granting press rights to the few legal opposition parties and tolerating a semilegal religious opposition press. He also dissolved Nasir's Arab Socialist Union in favor of the new National Democratic Party (NDP) with its own newspaper. [REDACTED]

Government-press relations became volatile by the late 1970s because Sadat was unwilling to tolerate increasing criticism of his policies. He enforced adherence to the government line by making chief editors of the government-owned press the equivalent of Nasir's official censors. The partisan press remained uncensored but was given public and private warnings for violating Sadat's wishes. Numerous journalists who criticized the regime, including Haykal, were suspended and forced to publish abroad, although they retained their salaries and most were not imprisoned. Following the food riots of 1977, Sadat shut down several publications and made journalists legally liable for criticizing the regime, even in foreign publications. [REDACTED]

Despite these controls, Sadat found it increasingly difficult to limit all criticism of his policies. His crackdown on the opposition in September 1981—one month prior to his assassination—signaled the end of his experiment in political liberalization. The publications of both the legal political parties and the semilegal religious opposition were shut down for alleged antiregime activity, including the incitement of sectarian divisions and the fostering of domestic instability. Similar charges were levied against 31 journalists, including Haykal, whom Sadat imprisoned along with some 1,500 other persons. Scores of "politically unreliable" journalists from the government-owned press, moreover, were suspended and detailed to makework positions in the Ministry of Information. [REDACTED]

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Appendix B

Selected Newspapers and Periodicals

Daily Newspapers

The three most influential daily newspapers are *Al-Ahram*, *Al-Akhbar*, and *Al-Jumhuriyah*, each with a circulation more than 450,000, according to US Embassy reporting. *Al-Ahram* (*The Pyramids*), founded in 1875, is the best known and oldest Arabic language newspaper. It is aimed at a well-educated readership and provides excellent coverage of foreign affairs. Its staff includes some of Egypt's best political minds, many of whom are leftist intellectuals who were out of favor under Sadat. The most prominent and respected of those is Ahmad Baha al-Din, who writes a daily column almost as popular as the column of Sadat loyalist Anis Mansur. Baha al-Din since his reinstatement has published several columns defending Nasir's policies. [REDACTED]

Al-Ahram lost most of its special influence with the government when Sadat fired chief editor Haykal in 1974. Succeeding chief editors were unable to establish important reputations or win Sadat's confidence. Current chief editor Ibrahim Nafei, given his close working relationship with Mubarak, is fast becoming a special spokesman of the regime. [REDACTED]

Al-Akhbar (*The News*), was founded in 1944 and is Egypt's best selling daily newspaper. *Akhbar al-Yawm* (*Today's News*) is its weekend edition and has a separate staff. The paper excels in coverage of domestic developments and attracts an educated middle class readership. Musa Sabri is the chief editor of *Al-Akhbar*, and Ibrahim Saada is the chief editor of *Akhbar al-Yawm*. [REDACTED]

Musa Sabri does not appear to enjoy the official access he once had under Sadat, but he supports Mubarak's policies vigorously. *Al-Akhbar* generally is pro-US and anti-Communist, although Musa Sabri has criticized the US-Israeli strategic cooperation agreement. Mustafa Amin, cofounder of *Al-Akhbar* and a political liberal arrested by Nasir in the 1960s, was rehabilitated by Sadat as the paper's chief editor in the early 1970s. He currently writes a daily column

for *Al-Akhbar* called "Fikrah!" (An Idea!) and probably is the most popular and respected journalist in Egypt. Galal al-Din al-Hamamsi, a pre-1952 liberal journalist removed by Sadat in the late 1970s, has resumed his column in *Al-Akhbar* under Mubarak. [REDACTED]

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Al-Jumhuriyah (*The Republic*) was founded by Nasir in 1952 to express the views of the military officers who led the revolution. Sadat was its first editor. The paper has the lowest circulation of the three dailies and the most severe financial problems, according to the US Embassy. *Al-Jumhuriyah* also is the least professional of the three major dailies and is written to appeal to less well-educated urban workers and villagers. In contrast to its leftist rhetoric under Nasir, the paper today has a generally conservative and anti-Communist tone. Mubarak reinstated Kamel Zuhayri, a Nasirist critic of Sadat, suspended in September 1981, and he writes a daily column beside that of chief editor and Sadat loyalist Muhsin Muhammad. [REDACTED]

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In recent months, *Al-Jumhuriyah's* assistant chief editor Muhammad Hayawan has written a series of anti-Semitic articles linking Jews to a "worldwide Communist conspiracy." The US Embassy reports that Hayawan has a reputation for writing anti-Semitic articles, and Sadat used to censor his work. A source close to Mubarak told a US Embassy official that the Mubarak government tolerates Hayawan because he is considered insignificant. [REDACTED]

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Periodicals

The most politically interesting of the many periodicals produced by the government-owned press are the weekly magazines *Uktubar*, *Al-Musawwar*, *Al-Ahram al-Iqtisaadi*, and *Rose al-Yusuf*. [REDACTED]

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Egyptian reads edition of Al-Ahram carrying draft text of the peace treaty with Israel in November 1978. [REDACTED]



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Uktubar (October) was established shortly after the Middle East war of 1973. US Embassy sources note that it is probably the most widely read pictorial magazine in Egypt. It covers a wide range of subjects and generally reflects the government line. Board chairman and chief editor Anis Mansur, also a columnist for *Al-Ahram*, is a Sadat loyalist who has vigorously defended the Mubarak government's policies. Ihsan Abd al-Qaddus, a leftist intellectual, journalist, and well-known novelist, has resumed writing for *October* after being suspended in 1980 for criticizing Sadat's policies. [REDACTED]

Al-Musawwar (The Illustrated), founded in 1944, is Egypt's oldest pictorial magazine. According to US Embassy sources, domestic readership of *Al-Musawwar* is less than *October*, but it retains a sizable readership abroad. The magazine generally follows the government line and often publishes politically significant articles and interviews. Chief editor Makram Muhammad Ahmad is a major contributor who appears to enjoy some official access. His articles and interviews seem to offer an insight into government attitudes and potential policy decisions. For example, his recent extensive interview of Coptic Pope Shinuda seems to be preparing the Egyptian public for the cleric's probable release from enforced seclusion in the near future. [REDACTED]

Al-Ahram al-Iqtisaadi (literally *The Economic Al-Ahram*) probably has changed more than any other periodical since Mubarak took office. It was founded in the 1970s by Butrus Ghali, now Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, and quickly became a respected conservative economic weekly. Since mid-1982, however, *Al-Iqtisaadi* has seemed more like an organ of the leftist opposition. The change in orientation, we believe, may have come from a government initiative to develop an official vehicle for leftist writers. In late 1982 the weekly published a series of articles that criticized the US aid program and claimed that US officials in Egypt constitute "a shadow government" that is "penetrating Egyptian society." [REDACTED]

We believe that Mubarak may have initially tolerated the leftist rhetoric in *Al-Iqtisaadi* as a kind of safety valve for such criticism. Chief editor Lutfi Abd al-Azim—an old-line Nasirist—evidently became overzealous, however, in exploiting this tolerance. The US Embassy reports that the Mubarak government threatened to remove Abd al-Azim if the magazine failed to moderate its criticism. Since late 1982, *Al-Iqtisaadi* continues to project leftist views, but its tone has become much less hostile and generally falls short of embarrassing the regime. [REDACTED]

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Egyptians read news of President Carter's peace negotiations in March 1978.



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Rose al-Yusuf, named after the woman who founded the magazine at the beginning of this century, is a leftist weekly with a strong following among intellectuals. Chief editor Abd al-Aziz Khamis, appointed by Sadat in the late 1970s, has moderated the tone of *Rose al-Yusuf* and hired several anti-Communist journalists. *Rose al-Yusuf* still publishes articles critical of government policy, however, and occasionally includes a muckraking editorial. Several Marxists suspended by Sadat are again writing for the magazine.

The Partisan Press

Five of the six legal political parties currently publish newspapers. They include the ruling National Democratic Party's (NDP) *Mayu* (*May*), the leftist National Progressive Unionist Grouping's (NPUG) *Al-Ahali* (*The Native Masses*), the moderate left Socialist Labor Party's *Al-Shaab* (*The People*), the rightist Socialist Liberal Party's *Al-Ahrar* (*The Liberals*), and the moderate right New Wafd Party's *Al-Wafd* (*The Delegation*). In addition, two religious weeklies published by political parties made their debut in 1982: the NDP's *Al-Liwa al-Islami* (*The Islamic Standard*)

and the Socialist Liberal Party's *Al-Nur* (*The Light*). The little-known Umma Party recently has received permission from the Higher Press Council to publish a weekly paper. In addition, the Council approved the NPUG's proposal to publish a magazine of literary criticism called *Al-Muwajahah* (*Confrontation*).

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The Mubarak government continues to prevent the Coptic Church and the semilegal Muslim Brotherhood from publishing, despite court rulings upholding their right to do so. We believe the government is concerned that the return of the sectarian publications might incite Muslim-Coptic tensions similar to those that led to violence in 1981.

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the Mubarak government may lift its ban on the Brotherhood periodical *Al-Daawah* (*The Call*) by midyear. We believe that the Muslim Brotherhood's *Al-Itisaam* (*Perseverance*) and the Coptic *Al-Watani* (*The Nation*) may also soon receive government approval. Meanwhile, members of the Muslim Brotherhood are using the legal opposition press as a vehicle for interviews and articles.

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The regime has relied on the NDP's newspaper, *Mayu*, as one of its principal vehicles for countering the opposition's attacks. *Mayu* was founded by Sadat in 1981 and named in honor of his "Corrective Revolution" of May 1971. Its high circulation probably reflects its policy of free subscriptions rather than its popularity, according to US Embassy sources. The Mubarak government recently converted the paper to a daily, apparently to increase its influence prior to the elections. *Mayu* reports on activities of both the NDP and the opposition parties. It frequently defends the government's positions, although its editorials occasionally have criticized Israel and the United States. [REDACTED]

Mubarak, unlike Sadat, does not contribute articles to *Mayu*, but he does monitor the paper's content and personnel closely, according to the US Embassy. Mubarak in 1981 fired chief editor Ibrahim Saada, a Sadat appointee, for publishing in *Akhbar al-Yawm* a criticism of the former parliamentary speaker and the former head of the Consultative Council. Saada remains the chief editor of *Akhbar al-Yawm*, and Sabri Abu al-Majd has replaced him as *Mayu*'s chief editor. [REDACTED]

Al-Ahali began in 1978 with NPUG party leader Khalid Muhi al-Din—a Marxist and former Free Officer—as board chairman. Sadat banned *Al-Ahali* in 1981 and arrested several of its writers who were later released by Mubarak. The US Embassy notes that the paper retains an avid readership among professionals and intellectuals but that this probably is insufficient to meet its expenses. US Embassy sources suspect that the USSR may provide some funding. [REDACTED]

Al-Ahali defends Nasir's economic and social policies, supports nationalism and secularism (without denying the Islamic tradition), criticizes Egypt's relationship with the United States, and vehemently opposes the Camp David accords. *Al-Ahali*'s writers include leftist members of the government-owned press. Khalid Muhi al-Din himself frequently contributes. *Al-Ahali* has published a series of provocative interviews with important figures who opposed Sadat's policies, including Haykal, Muslim Brotherhood leader Omar Talmasani, former Vice President Ali Sabri, several former Free Officers, and Wafdist leader Fuad Siraj al-Din. [REDACTED]

According to a recent article in *Al-Ahali*, NPUG plans to publish a periodical called *Al-Taliah* (*The Vanguard*) named after the leftist government-owned publication shut down by Sadat in the late 1970s. Lutfi al-Khawli, a Marxist and party member who avoided arrest by Sadat in September 1981 only because he was out of the country, will be the periodical's chief editor. The US Embassy reports NPUG had not received official permission to publish *Al-Taliah* but is taking advantage of a loophole in the press law of 1980. [REDACTED]

Al-Shaab was founded in 1978 by the leader of the Socialist Labor Party, Ibrahim Shukri. Shukri initially supported Sadat's policies, but by 1980 *Al-Shaab* had surpassed *Al-Ahali* as the most vitriolic critic of the regime. *Al-Shaab* became the most widely read opposition paper under Sadat and continues to appeal to middle-class businessmen and professionals. Little is known about its finances. [REDACTED]

Al-Shaab is a major critic of the Mubarak regime, but its rhetoric is now much lower key than *Al-Ahali*'s. The paper strongly opposes peace with Israel and the granting of US basing rights on Egyptian soil but differs little with the regime on economic policy. *Al-Shaab* also stresses political and social muckraking. Shukri is a major contributor. The paper features a Muslim Brotherhood member and former writer for *Al-Daawah* Muhammad Abd al-Qaddus, who contributes nonpolemical pieces on political and philosophical issues. [REDACTED]

Al-Shaab orchestrated an attack against the government and the NDP for "political gangsterism" last summer when Shukri contended he was the victim of NDP "dirty tricks." The paper's rhetoric has toned down recently, probably because the SLP wants to run in the May parliamentary election. Nonetheless, a scuffle involving Shukri in February has again led *Al-Shaab* to accuse the NDP of "hooliganism." The paper probably will tone down its attacks only after the SLP derives maximum political advantage from the incident. [REDACTED]

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Al-Ahrar began publishing in 1977. The Socialist Liberal Party leader and *Al-Ahrar* board chairman Mustafa Kamal Murad is a former Free Officer and businessman. *Al-Ahrar* criticized Sadat, but he apparently found the paper too ineffectual to require shutting down during the crackdown on the opposition in 1981. The paper's liberal views appeal to private businessmen and educated, wealthy landowners. *Al-Ahrar* has had staffing and financial problems. We suspect it has the smallest circulation among opposition party papers. [REDACTED]

US Embassy reporting suggests that personal animosity between Mubarak and Murad is a major reason why *Al-Ahrar* has become a strong critic of the regime's policies. The paper reflects the Liberals' platform advocating greater use of Islamic law and an expanded private sector. Murad, who is a major contributor to the paper, has strongly demanded guarantees of free parliamentary elections and threatened a boycott if his demands are not met. *Al-Ahrar*, like *Al-Shaab*, has featured articles by Muslim Brotherhood writer Muhammad Abd al-Qaddus. [REDACTED]

Al-Wafd, the weekly of the New Wafd Party, published its first issue in late March 1984. The high quality of newsprint used in the first several issues seems to indicate that *Al-Wafd* has wealthy supporters. The New Wafd took the name of the liberal party that dominated Egyptian politics prior to 1952. It was re-created in 1977, withdrew from political activities in 1978 in protest against Sadat's policies, and re-emerged this year to compete in the parliamentary election. *Al-Wafd*'s chief editor is Mustafa Shardi. The paper probably will draw a strong readership from upper-class professionals and businessmen. [REDACTED]

The first issue of *Al-Wafd* highlighted the party program. The New Wafd generally supports Mubarak's foreign policy. Domestically, however, it favors political liberalization on the Western model and probably will surpass even the Socialist Liberals in demanding economic liberalization. In early April *Al-Wafd* became the first paper to be confiscated by the Mubarak government, but later a Cairo court ordered its release. The paper had published a story dealing

with the theft of evidence regarding Islamic extremists on trial for the Sadat assassination conspiracy. The Mubarak government appeared concerned that the article would stir up Islamic sentiment prior to the parliamentary election. [REDACTED]

Al-Liwa al-Islami and *Al-Nur* are the most noteworthy of the moderate Islamic weeklies that appeared in 1982. We believe the appearance of these papers may be part of a strategy by the Mubarak government to develop alternatives to the Islamic weeklies banned in 1981. Both papers appear successful, but *Al-Liwa*, which has significant financial backing from the NDP, seems to have the widest audience, according to the US Embassy. *Al-Liwa*'s chief editor Ahmad Zayn told US Embassy officials that in several initial issues in early 1982 the paper printed and sold over 300,000 copies, of which about 50,000 went to the Arab states. [REDACTED]

In early 1982, the content of *Al-Liwa* was provocative, featuring interviews with imprisoned Islamic fundamentalists. Since that time, *Al-Liwa* tends to be more ethical than political in content, focusing on religion as it relates to current social issues. *Al-Nur* is now more outspoken than *Al-Liwa* and has a marked polemical tone. The paper strongly supports the adoption of Islamic law and is highly critical of Israeli and US policies in the Middle East. [REDACTED]

Writers for the two religious weeklies include members of the sponsoring parties, Islamic moderates from al-Azhar University, and well-known nonestablishment religious figures. Shaykh Abd al-Hamid Kishk, who was arrested by Sadat in 1981 and who influences the Islamic societies on university campuses, has contributed regularly to *Al-Liwa*. Shaykh Mitwalli al-Sharawi, a former Minister of Religious Trusts and strong critic of Sadat, is another contributor. [REDACTED]

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